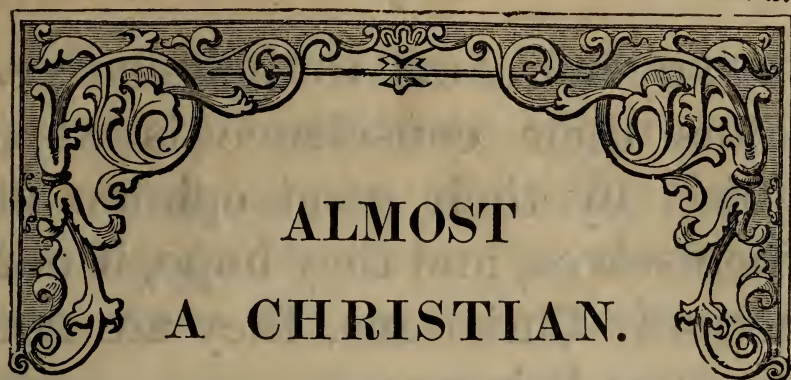


Geo. Ball



ALMOST A CHRISTIAN.

THERE are multitudes who acknowledge Christianity to be true, and who join in the popular profession of faith in Christ. They attend public worship, and take part in religious ordinances. They are blameless in their conduct, amiable in their tempers, and, perhaps, liberal to the poor. And yet many such persons, it may be, have never seriously asked themselves whether they are really Christians or not. They consider themselves better than many others. They publicly acknowledge God; and no one can

lay any moral evil to their charge. Thus their conscience is kept quiet, by their good opinion of themselves, and they hope, if not actually Christians, they are not far from being so.

Now this is a very dangerous state to remain in. It is more than dangerous; it is really alarming, just because it does not excite alarm. Such persons may be going on quietly to everlasting ruin. They are *apparently* on the road to heaven, and may never discover their mistake till they drop into hell. This “almost-a-Christian” condition, as it is called, serves Satan’s purpose well; because he is satisfied if a soul be kept out of the kingdom of grace, even though it be not guilty of great wickedness.

To remain thus, “*almost a Christian*,” and to die in this condition is to be eternally lost; because, in God’s sight, there are only two classes of persons—those who are *in Christ*, and those who *are not*. Those who are in Christ, are safe; but for those who are not in Christ, there is no salvation.

When judgment fell on the world in the days of Noah, each individual was in either one or other of two conditions. He was either in the ark, or he was not. No matter how near a man might have been to the door of it, if he was not inside when the door was shut, he was shut out, and was lost.

When judgment was coming, in like manner, on the land of

Egypt, every person in that land was either under the shelter of the blood of the lamb, which was God's appointed provision for their deliverance, or he was not. An Israelite might have been intending to shelter himself, or preparing to do so; he might have had a lamb within reach, and even intended to kill it; but, unless the blood was on the lintel and the door-posts, the judgment smote his house.

Now, Reader, apply to yourself what we have been saying. Are you under the shelter of the blood of Christ, or are you still exposed to judgment? Are you in the true Ark, or are you outside? Unless you are in the life-boat, you are really just as much exposed to

drowning, as if it were a thousand miles off.

There is really no such thing as being half a Christian. There is no such thing as being partially regenerated. There is such a thing as thinking about Christ, without giving him the confidence of the heart. There is such a thing as hoping to be a Christian some day to come—a day which may never arrive. There is such a thing as being convinced, but not converted. To be really a Christian, you must be not only *thinking* of it, or *intending*, or *hoping*—you must be not only convinced of your danger, but you must have actually taken refuge in Christ.

Are you then, Reader, really in Christ or not? “How am I to

know ?” do you ask ? If you ask this question with a heart intent on knowing the truth, we may give you some tests, furnished by God’s Word, by which, through His grace, you may discover your actual condition before Him.

First.—A Christian is one who has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 1.) He has learned the deadly nature of sin. He knows that God, who is infinitely holy, cannot pass by sin as a little thing. He knows nothing defiled will be admitted into His presence. He knows that he himself is a sinner, and that he cannot stand before God as righteous. He therefore acknowledges himself guilty before God, and hides himself in Christ as his refuge—his deliverer.

Secondly.—A Christian is one who loves God. He believes that God so loved him, that He gave His only begotten Son to be a propitiation for his sins. He therefore loves God as his Father, and trusts Him as his almighty and everlasting Friend. (1 John iv. 10.)

Thirdly.—A Christian is one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. When he thinks of Him who loved him, and gave Himself for him, (Gal. ii. 20,) he feels his heart constrained to love Him in return. He therefore seeks to please Him, and glorify Him in all his ways, for His unspeakable grace.

Fourthly.—A Christian is one who is “born of God.” (John i. 13.) He is “a new creature.”

(2 Cor. v. 17.) His soul is the seat of Divine power, which causes him to hate sin, and to love holiness. He has new affections and sympathies. And as he loves God his Father, he feels himself drawn by a family-affection to love all His children, because they are His children. (1 John v. 1.)

Reader, do these marks attach to you? If not, may you not be deceiving yourself in assuming that you are a Christian?



DUBLIN TRACT REPOSITORY, 10 D'OLIER STREET.

LONDON: WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH.

Sold in Penny Packets of 3 copies each.

W. Porteous, Printer, 18 Wicklow-street, Dublin.